

E-N-D

Radical Student Union
Bet Holiday
Oct. '69

ON STRIKE

KEEP IT CLOSED

150,000 workers at General Electric have begun a nationwide strike for a new contract. For the first time in 20 years the nine major unions in G.E. have joined together in seeking a National contract. G.E. frightened by the power of all the unions united, wants to break this alliance. As lucrative profits from foreign investments melt away, G.E. wants to replace them by dipping into the real wages of workers at home. Nixon's planned unemployment is designed to make resistance difficult or impossible by creating an employers' market. United G.E. workers are throwing a monkeywrench into these plans.

These are their chief demands.

1. A cost of living clause that matches price increases penny for penny.
This is necessary just to stay even with prices which are rising 6% a year (especially GE's prices). The company has offered instead a yearly wage-reopener which means that the union would have to strike every year for a fair raise.
2. A company paid full coverage medical plan.
The workers want the equivalent of Blue Cross-Blue Shield. Under the current plan it is almost impossible to collect.
3. An improved pension plan.
Currently the income from the pension fund is \$38 million larger than benefits paid; furthermore supervisory personnel get pensions nine times as large as those of production workers.
4. Paid sick leave.
As of now there is none! The union wants up to 20 days a year.

GE aside from refusing to negotiate its offer and these proposals with the unions or to send the issues into binding arbitration, has demands of its own. GE wants an end to the National Contract so that strikes can be broken at the local shop level. GE also wants the new contract to restrict grievance-provoked strikes so that the union loses its ability to act effectively. In a real sense the workers at GE are fighting imperialism. GE is the world's fourth largest corporation with over 160 subsidiaries in 30 countries including the racist pig republic of South Africa. GE is the second largest military contractor in the U.S. GE's interests in Asia, Africa, and Latin America are at stake in many liberation struggles - in most of which the U.S. military is involved. One of the after effects of the breakdown of imperialism is a drop in the real wages of GE employees whose average hourly pay is \$3.25. This amounts to \$6500 a year - not very much when the Dept. of Labor says that a family of four needs \$8-9000 a year to live decently. Many workers at GE relate their low wages to imperialism and the war in Vietnam. A group of workers at GE in Oakland walked off the job on Oct. 15th. Now its "No business as usual" at GE.

The effects of imperialism-monopoly capitalism-are not limited to the workplace or to Vietnam. Exploitation is many sided. GE has been one of the most and persistent price fixers in the U.S. for over fifty years. Collusion in bidding to the government and consultation on prices has led to 64 anti-trust suits and criminal cases since 1911, 49 since 1957. One reason for GE's many convictions is their readiness to cheat other corporations as well as the consumers. The current strike at GE and General Electric's attempt to smash it are part of a long struggle. The UE, United Electrical, Radio and Machine workers had organized all of GE, Westinghouse, and RCA (once owned by GE) i.e. the bulk of the electrical industry. After World War II the UE was attacked by a combination of the companies, the CIO, the government (HUAC and McCarthy red-baited the UE) and anti-communist union members. Now 35 unions face monolithic GE.

PROGRESSIVE U.E.

The U.E. has a progressive history of raising radical issues like the greater exploitation of women, blacks, and the effects of imperialism on the labor movement. During the current strike, for example, the union will hold political education classes for its members on labor history, etc. This progressive attitude made the U.E. a favorite target of reactionaries like Ronald Reagan who, while he was hosting G.E. theatre on Sunday nights, got his start as a right-wing agitator by speaking against the UE at all the GE plants in the U.S.

Every morning a group of ten people in suits enter the Wood St. General Electric plant to perform their jobs and to plan how to defeat the strike. Most of us at the University are being trained to fill their places. As one young striker told us: "you students are trained by the corporations to be managers. The University doesn't teach you anything about how to help working people." Students at Cal have a choice. We can take those jobs and break strikes twenty years from now or we can join with working people to build a revolutionary movement to overthrow the corporations that run this country.



WHAT STUDENTS CAN DO

G.E. has two plants in Oakland. The union has informally asked for our support on their picket lines. They also need money. People can go directly to either the Service shop (34th St. and Wood St.-- take the Nimitz South toward San Jose to Cypress St. off ramp. Turn right on 32nd. St. and then right on Wood.) or the Transformer Shop (E. 14th St. and 54th. Ave.) You can go anytime. You should speak to the picket captain if you go on your own. You can rap with strikers, find out why they're on strike, and see for yourself where the working man is at.

G.E. hasn't yet tried to bring in scabs. When they do (they almost certainly will), we will try to organize a mass mobilization. We encourage people to visit the strike before this happens. There will also be a forum--information at the RSU table on campus-- at which a G.E. striker and a striker from Pittsburgh Des Moines Steel will speak along with films of recent strikes in the Bay Area